



# Spring & Summer 2006



## HAMPTON POLICE DIVISION NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH NEWSLETTER



### **Chief's Message**

#### **No New Phenomenon**

Gangs are not a new phenomenon in this country. Gang-like activity has actually plagued large cities around the nation for years. Remember the Mafia? The Mafia was an organized criminal secret society which evolved in mid-19th century Sicily that later migrated following waves of Italian immigration to the United States. Its members would request large sums of money from the wealthy in exchange for protection. If the money wasn't paid, the recipients could expect violence such as kidnappings, bombings, and murder. And of course, how could we forget the infamous Al "Scarface" Capone. He was America's best known gangster and the single greatest symbol of the collapse of law and order in the United States during the 1920s Prohibition era.

But in today's world, law enforcement officials are dealing with an even greater gang problem – the unrelenting street-gangs. There are the Crips and the Bloods, which originated in the streets of Los Angeles, and the Folk Nation and People Nation, based out of Chicago. But one of the most ruthlessly dangerous street gangs in America today is MS-13. They consist primarily of mostly Salvadorans and other Central Americans who have fled El Salvador as a result of their homeland's civil war. Most of its members are groups of disaffected youths banded together for protection and support. The dowry for entering this transnational family often involves murder, extortion and drug smuggling and its bloody tracks have remarkably spread from Central America, across the United States and now even to Europe.

The gang name Mara Salvatrucha, or more commonly "MS-13", is derived from "Mara", a Salvadoran word for gang, and "Salvatrucha", meaning Salvadoran guy. It originated from the allegiance formed between Mara Salvatrucha & the Mexican Mafia better known as "La Eme". La Eme translated into English is the letter "M" which is the 13<sup>th</sup> letter of the alphabet, hence the name "MS-13". Members range from 12-year-olds to adults and include individuals from various Latin countries. Their common identifiers range from the initials "MS-13", "M", "MS" or "Salvadorian Pride" tattooed on their bodies, to simple hand signs of the letter "M". Because of their close ties to their former homelands, they often have access to sophisticated military weapons thus making firearms trafficking one of their main criminal enterprises.

Law enforcement officials across the country, including the Hampton Police Division, have begun to target this criminal organization. Last year, our agency implemented the Gang Intelligence Unit in an effort to begin educating neighborhoods, civic groups, parents, teachers and students throughout the city of the dangers of becoming associated with gangs like MS-13. In fact, last year the U.S. Justice Department also created a new high level task force to battle MS-13 and its brutal and heinous activities. The FBI has reported that this particular gang has as many as 10,000 active members dispersed in 33 states including Washington DC. Members have been accused of burglaries, drug sales, weapons smuggling, extortion, illegal firearms sales, auto thefts, murder and even rape. To authorities, it remains one of the most vexing international criminal organizations because to dismantle it would require the heart of the leadership to be disassembled. Because MS-13 is comprised primarily of a group of "cliques" that operate independently of each other, there exists no clear hierarchy or structure for authorities to be able to begin dismantling.

Fortunately, over the last few years, Hampton's gang problems have not escalated like some surrounding jurisdictions. However, the Hampton Police Division continues to remain diligent in its efforts to eradicate gang-like activities throughout the City. To learn more about gangs or to attend one of our Gang Awareness Workshops or to schedule a workshop in your area, I encourage you to contact our Gang Intelligence Unit Coordinator at 727-6375. After all, together we can help win the battle against corruption and crime.

With Committed Service,

Chief C. R. Jordan, Jr.

### **WHAT TO DO IN A VEHICLE ACCIDENT**

Have you ever been involved in a "fender bender" and just did not know what to do? Follow these simple tips on the best way to handle a collision.

Check to see if there are injuries.

Notify the police even if there are no injuries and minor damage.

Avoid moving your vehicles so that officers can fully investigate the cause of the accident.

Make sure emergency flashers are on to avoid other accidents by passing vehicles.

Have your driver's license and insurance card ready & vehicle registration for the officer.

Try and get a witness to stay to give a statement to the officer.



## ***TIPS TO PREVENT STREET CRIMES***

- ✓ When in public, walk quickly and watchfully. Communicate a sense of self-confidence and purpose.
- ✓ CARRY FEW VALUABLES, hold your purse tightly and close to your body. Keep your wallet in a buttoned pocket.
- ✓ Think ahead of SAFE HAVENS to escape to and obtain aid should the need arise, and you should always keep your cell phone fully charged.
- ✓ Try not to walk alone, there is strength in numbers. This is especially important at night. Always keep a distance between yourself and strangers.
- ✓ Avoid poorly lit streets, avoid shortcuts through parks, alleys, tunnels and driveways. Always travel on main streets and well lit streets. If you get lost, seek help from the police or businesses in the area. Carry a flashlight at night to help illuminate your travels.

## **When You Discover Your Premises Have Been Burglarized**

Leave the home and call the police from a neighbor's house, do not check the house for intruders.

Do not touch anything with your hands. Leave everything just as it is and exit the home or apartment.

If you are already inside immediately call the police.

Provide the police with any accurate description of all the property that was taken.

Make sure you have serial and model numbers for expensive items.



## **\*\*\*Reasons to Get an Alarm System\*\*\***

An alarm system is an excellent deterrent to crime. More than 90% of the convicted burglars interviewed in a University of Miami study said they would avoid breaking into a home with an alarm system.



Display security system decals on your windows and doors.

Your security system should include a loud siren, sensors on both the front and rear doors, and motion sensors in the master bedroom where thieves search for cash, jewelry and guns. Thieves look for valuable electronics, which are commonly located in the family rooms.

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## **Boaters World**

### **Regarding Suspicious Activity**

- \*Aggressive activities.
- \*Delivery or placement of unusual packages.
- \*Unusual diving operations; unmarked divers entering the water near bridges, port facilities or vessels.
- \*Unusual night operations.
- \*Lights flashing between ship and shore.
- \*Vessels that anchor or cruise in one area for no apparent reason.
- \*Sophisticated radio or scanner devices.
- \*Be sure to report any of these activities.



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## SPRING CLEANING TIPS

- Install a peephole or wide-angle viewer in all entry doors so you can see outside.
- Outside doors should have securely mounted deadbolts locks.
- Trim all trees, bushes and shrubs that offer concealment.
- Install outside lighting to eliminate dark areas around doors or windows.
- On an extended absence, ask someone to watch your home.
- Keep an eye on vacant homes in the neighborhood mainly for trespassers.



## Door to Door Solicitations



1. **Know the charity.** Never give to an unfamiliar organization without doing some research. Ask for written literature and read it.
2. **Find out where your money goes.** Find out how much of your contribution is going towards the company and how much goes toward the services you want to support.
3. **Demand identification.** Always ask to see the identification for both the solicitor and the charitable organization.
4. **Beware of the tall tale.** Don't give because solicitors are good actors, do your homework.
5. **Write a check and never give cash.** Don't give cash to a solicitor and never make a check payable to the door solicitor. Make checks payable to the charity and request a receipt.
6. **Do not give in to pressure.** Don't be intimidated by a pushy solicitor. Take time to consider whether you want to make a contribution.

**HAVE A GREAT & SAFE SUMMER**

*Officer Bonita G. Powers/Neighborhood Watch Coordinator*